United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ United Nations emergency operation today commences airlift of emergency food and other relief supplies to Sudan.

+ Ukrainian soldier with United Nations Protection Force killed today in Sarajevo by a sniper.

+ Somalia welcomes emergency relief efforts now under way in war-ridden and famine-stricken country; World Food Programme sends technical mission to Somalia to look at facilities in preparation for larger scale humanitarian relief operation.

+ Secretary-General leaving on Monday for London, where he will co-chair International Conference on former Yugoslavia jointly organized by United Nations and European Community; "might" be briefed in London by his envoy to Libya, Vladimir Petrovsky, on his meeting today with Libyan leader.

+ Turkey requests inclusion of an additional item entitled "The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina" in agenda of General Assembly's forty-sixth session.

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The United Nations emergency operation and the World Food Programme (WFP) today commenced its first airlift of 1,000 metric tons of food and 75 metric tons of emergency relief supplies to Juba, in the Sudan. According to a press release issued by the operation office, food stocks in the area have been completely exhausted. The operation is intended to bring immediate relief to the 300,000 civilians who, caught in the conflict between the Government of Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army, face imminent starvation.

The food supplies were flown in from Entebbe, in Uganda, on an Ilyushin 76 aircraft, which then headed back to Entebbe for reloading. The press release says that throughout the duration of the operation, the WFP will organize two flights a day from Entebbe to Juba.

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While expressing optimism that the relief efforts would continue unimpeded, the United Nations also appealed to all parties concerned to cooperate in the emergency operation.

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A United Nations spokeswoman reported today that a Ukrainian soldier with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) was killed today in Sarajevo by a sniper. She said the Secretary-General had expressed his sadness at the soldier's death and conveyed his condolences to the Ukrainian Government.

The death of the Ukrainian soldier brings to 12 the total number of fatal casualties suffered by the personnel of UNPROFOR in Yugoslavia.

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The Somali Permanent Mission to the United Nations has welcomed the emergency relief efforts now under way in the war-ridden and famine-stricken country.

In a statement yesterday, the Mission's Chargé d'affaires, Ms. Fatun Mohamed Hassan, expressed her gratitude to the United Nations relief efforts, including the beginning of a two-month emergency airlift of food by the United States. She expressed the hope that the much-needed humanitarian assistance by the international community would contribute towards restoring peace and stability in Somalia after 18 months of factional fighting.

Meanwhile, the World Food Programme (WFP) has sent a technical mission to Somalia to look at the facilities in the country in preparation for a larger scale humanitarian relief operation to help the 4.5 to 6 million Somalis affected by the crisis. The mission is expected to report to the Secretary-General early next week.

Paul Mitchell, spokesman of the WFP, said in an interview yesterday that the Agency had already begun its airlift in cooperation with the Red Cross and other agencies into small isolated centres in the interior of Somalia and had for some time been flying in food to Mogadishu and the southern part of Somalia.

Until now there had been no armed security to protect either the relief personnel or the relief convoys operating in Somalia, Mr. Mitchell said. The Agency had hired local people to provide security at the port and to protect the convoys when they leave the port and go to the distribution centres. But, he said, "there is no one to protect the people that food is given to". Often, food that was distributed during the day, was taken away by gun men at night. He expressed the hope that the presence of United Nations security personnel, who are expected to be deployed in Somalia shortly, would be a deterrence for bandits trying to loot the convoys and would be able to provide the kind of protection needed.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali will be leaving on Monday for London, where he will co-chair the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia jointly organized by the United Nations and the European Community. He said today he hoped that through the Conference a solution would be found to both the humanitarian and political aspects of the crisis in that area. The meeting is scheduled from 26 to 28 August.

According to a spokeswoman, Vladimir Petrovsky met this morning with Libyan leader Colonel Colonel Muammar Al-Qathafi, and "he might go to London to brief the Secretary-General" on the meeting, while the Secretary-General is in London.

Mr. Petrovsky, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, went to Tripoli on Monday to deliver a letter from the Secretary-General to the Libyan leader, seeking the cooperation of the Libyan Government in establishing responsibility for the downing of Pan Am flight 103 and UTA flight 772. His visit followed a decision by the Security Council last week that Libya had not met its requirements for lifting sanctions imposed in April in connection with the attacks on the two planes.

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Turkey has requested the inclusion of an additional item entitled "The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina", in the agenda of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

An explanatory memorandum attached to a letter yesterday to the Secretary-General states that the 47 members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference consider that "the violation of the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a member of the United Nations, and the grievous suffering inflicted on its inhabitants call for the early convening of the General Assembly at which the international community can voice its concern and seek to redress the intolerable situation prevailing in that country".

The letter to the Secretary-General was signed by the Turkish Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Mustapha Aksin. The General Committee will be meeting tomorrow to consider the request, and if it agrees to it, the General Assembly will meet on Monday morning to take up the issue.

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